

First Gulf of Mexico record of *Ranzania laevis*

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A LARGE specimen of the molid fish, *Ranzania laevis* (Pennant), was caught in February 1967 by Mr. Ray Thornton, a commercial fisherman, who hand-captured it in the surf two miles north of Little Marco Pass, Florida (26°02'N; 81°46'W). The specimen, in excellent condition, has been accessioned into the Florida Department of Natural Resources collections (FSBC 4681). Data for the specimen are as follows: total length 671 mm; length from snout to upper posterior point of body, excluding clavus 611 mm, including clavus 648 mm; greatest body depth 334 mm; predorsal length 548 mm; length of dorsal base 86 mm; preanal length 572 mm; length of anal base 73 mm; length of pectoral fin 118 mm; head length 232 mm; snout length 86 mm; postorbital length of head 115 mm; length of orbit 32 mm; basal elements in clavus 19; branched rays of clavus 19; dorsal rays 19; anal rays 19; pectoral rays 13; vertebrae 18; weight at capture 10 kg.

Since *R. laevis* apparently does not exceed a length of 800 mm (Fraser-Brunner, 1951, p. 98), we judge our specimen to be an adult. Gonads, however, were macroscopically indistinguishable.

Robins (1966) reviewed western Atlantic records of *R. laevis*, and described a specimen, presumably a juvenile, obtained from off Palm Beach, Florida, representing the first record from Atlantic waters of the United States. Of the four molid species known from Florida, three have now been reported from the Gulf of Mexico. Dawson (1965) summarized published records of *Mola mola* (Linnaeus) and *Masturus lanceolatus* (Liénard) from the Gulf, and added new records of each. The example herein described, representing the third species, constitutes the first record from the Gulf of Mexico and the first adult from waters adjacent to the eastern United States.

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LITERATURE CITED

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